



50p

St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch

FAITH — LOVE — COMMUNITY



Parish Magazine

May 2026

PARISH DIRECTORY

General inquiries: in the first instance, please contact the parish office.

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St Helen's Church is part of the **Ashby Churches**

Alliance Church	07753 679147
Ashby Baptist Church	01530 413721
Ashby Congregational	01530 563301
Ashby Methodist Church	01530 412298
Holy Trinity	01530 412339
Our Lady of Lourdes	01530 412237

Donations can be left in the boxes at the back of St Helen's Church, in the porch of Holy Trinity or the Congregational Church, or at any of Ashby's Co-ops. Thank you to everyone for the continued support.



FROM THE MINISTRY TEAM

One of the aspects of getting older is that I think about death and dying more than I ever used to do. Today (as I write) I picked up the Saturday paper and two articles immediately caught my eye. One was about the Assisted Dying Bill currently making its way through Parliament; the other was the story of someone who had opted for assisted dying in a Swiss clinic. What is a Christian to make of what seems to be an inexorable slide in favour of personal choice: choosing when – and how - to die? One thing that strikes me forcibly is that we live in a society which sets great store by personal choice, yet this insistence can become a kind of idolatry.

One option is to do nothing, but that seems to be a vote in favour of the general trend. And, make no mistake, it is a real choice. Doing nothing is not remaining neutral; it is a choice.

A variation on doing nothing is to convince myself that as a Christian I have no right to impose my views on the rest of society. Let the majority decide. That, too, is a choice.

How then are we to choose as Christians in a largely secular society? I offer one basic suggestion which applies to a number of grey areas in the current climate: I use my gift of personal choice to honour Christ.

In essence the choice is simple: will I recognise that my life is not my own or will I please myself? I serve a living Lord, whose will is enshrined in Scripture. The Bible tells me “I am not my own, I am bought with a price.” (1 Cor 6:20). The context is sexual morality, but we might apply it more broadly to encompass all behaviour, as when we sing the hymn, “Take my life”. The fifth verse, incidentally, has these momentous words, “Take my will, and make it Thine: it shall be no longer mine;”

The fact is, as a Christian, my will is no longer my own: I am a “slave of Christ”, the Christ who gave up His own life to save me. That means I take my orders from Him; I choose to obey Him rather than to please myself. It is a struggle because my sinful nature leads me to want to put myself first. There is a corollary, of course: I need to be conversant with the word of God

in order to discern His will.

Therein lies a paradox, for to be an obedient servant of Christ is in fact perfect freedom. St Augustine expressed this beautifully in his prayer:

Lord, you are the light of the minds who know you, the life of the souls who love you, and the strength of the souls who serve you. Help us to know you that we may truly love you, so to love you that we may fully serve You, whose service is perfect freedom. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Sue Brown



A large crowd gathered for the annual walk of witness. This year there were actors from Red River Theatre Company to

bring the Passion Narrative to life.



Heartfelt thanks to Adrienne, who recently retired from singing in the choir. She will be much missed but will still be boosting the congregation with her singing.



In April we hosted our Mayor, Damilola and members of the town council for a joyful civic service

ASHBY YOUTH FOR CHRIST

If you would like to sign up for regular updates either follow this link <http://eepurl.com/dvVqrj> or email helen.davis@yfc.co.uk. Alternatively you can scan the QR code. Thank you for all your prayers and support.



Last week our crafters had the opportunity to be part of the team of artists creating an outdoor work of art



that will be mounted on the wall of the Baptist Church for all on Brook Street to see during Ashby's Art Festival. They'll have another chance this evening. Thanks to Lisa and Sue who did a remarkable job of maintaining high artistic standards whilst patiently listening to (sometimes very loud) young people

with lots to talk and bounce about.

Thanks also to and for the other caring, praying adults who serve these young people with truth, grace, patience and kindness. Please pray for their renewed faith / faithfulness. Pray their work would be a joy to them.

Afternoon Tea

Please see the back cover of the magazine for information about our cream tea fundraiser which we will be holding on Saturday 13th June in St Helen's heritage centre. Tickets are available from <https://tinyurl.com/AYFCAT>

Adult tickets include the addition of 1 child each and it is only any additional children who would need a purchased ticket at £5 each (if they are going to eat the cream tea).

ASHBY JOY

Ashby JOY is a group of people in their 20s &30s from various local churches, who meet weekly for fellowship and study.

Our continually growing group of young adults has continued to meet every Thursday for discussion, study and fellowship. There are approximately 10 of us in attendance each week but we have around 20 people connected in to our community so far. We represent a variety of local churches. Back in April we marked Maundy Thursday with our take on a traditional Seder meal. All present enjoyed an opportunity to connect with one another and to use the time of communion to reflect before Easter.



We are also still enjoying working through John Mark Comer's 'Practicing The Way'. Whilst the sessions do follow a book, each one is stand alone and so new members are welcome on any occasion to join in. Please contact myself or get in touch with the parish office to receive a link to our WhatsApp group for more up to date information.

Please do keep all 20 of us in your prayers as we seek to learn more, together, about following Jesus and to grow in grace.

Emily Darlington

HOVERAID

One of the charities we support, financially and prayerfully, as a church, is Hoveraid. During April we hosted a guest speaker during our morning service and hosted a bring and share lunch to spend time continuing to learn about the work of the organisation.

In summary, Hoveraid is a Christian Humanitarian Aid charity working in Madagascar. They aim to bring aid to remote communities, build trust with the people they meet there, understand their needs, and tell others about the problems that they face. This often looks like helping people in very remote areas to access health care via hovercraft due to the lack of road and transport systems. In Madagascar, approximately 66% of the population faces difficulties in accessing care and a large proportion of these people live more than 5km away from healthcare facilities.

Recent stories (available to read in full on the Hoveraid website) include assisting with an emergency birth and resuscitation, assessing local schools after structural cyclone damage and delivering mobile health clinics to remote villages. In February this year, two unprecedented cyclones struck the island causing widespread destruction, loss of life and significant displacement of people. Hoveraid's work has continued since these events and has particularly focused around surveying the impacts of damage in the weeks immediately following the cyclones.

If you would like to find out more about their work, please do visit <https://hoveraid.org/> for more information and for recent updates to inspire your prayers.



PRAYERS FOR PENTECOST

As we approach Pentecost Sunday on 24th May, here are some prayers about the Holy Spirit, who filled the apostles with new power on this day, 50 days after Jesus rose from the grave.

First is **O Heavenly King** from the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition:

O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth,
who are everywhere present and fill all things,
Treasury of blessings and Giver of life,
come and abide in us,
cleanse us from every impurity,
and save our souls, O Good One.

This is said at the beginning of almost every Orthodox service and private prayer time. It may sound strange to our ears because there's no mention of the Father or the Son, Jesus Christ. We normally have this idea: we pray to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. But since the Holy Spirit is on a par with the Father and the Son, our choice of addressee will matter little to him. Put simply, God will understand, whoever we pray to.

Here's another from the Orthodox tradition. Possibly penned by Basil the Great (329 to 379), who was keen to educate people on the Holy Spirit. Be warned, the words are long and dense, probably to reflect the complexities of God. If they remind you of the popular Christian song 'Indescribable' by Chris Tomkin, that's almost certainly a coincidence.

First Kneeling Prayer

O spotless, undefiled, invisible, incomprehensible, and unchangeable Lord,
you alone are immortal and dwell in unapproachable light.
You created the world in wisdom and brought all things from non-existence
into being.

You have poured out your Holy Spirit on all flesh through your beloved Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him you have made us worthy to know you,
the true God.

Renew a right spirit within us.
Strengthen us in your fear, and guide our lives according to your
commandments.

Grant that we may worship you in spirit and in truth,
and do what is pleasing in your sight all the days of our life.

Note: there are three Kneeling Prayers in the Eastern
Orthodox Divine Liturgy, which is their service of Holy
Communion.

Finally we come closer to home with the first verse of a
well-known hymn by Bianco Da Siena (died 1434).

Come down, O Love divine,
seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter draw near,
Within my heart appear, and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

Quite a lot of the songs and poems about the Holy Spirit have some kindling
and fire, which may explain why I like my chiminea so much!

Richard Vann

WHO IS THE THIRD?

Who is the third who walks now beside you?
I see only two dejected lost men walking back from
A scene of utter devastation having witnessed their
leader
Crucified on a cross
Dead and gone

But no wait; there is a third walking gently beside them
Listening to their stories, their grief and their pain
As they share the story of Jesus their saviour
Crucified on a cross
Dead and gone

But slowly and surely the third man explains now
Explains from the scriptures all that's gone on
Foretold by the prophets a Saviour from heaven
Crucified on a cross
But not dead nor gone

They arrive at their home now and invite the stranger in
In to break bread and in to pour wine
And He is revealed now that crucified stranger
Alive and victorious
Not dead but gone on

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OUR WORSHIP IN MAY

	am	pm	Wednesday
1st Sunday 3rd May		6pm Choral Evensong + Soiree	1st Wednesday– 6th Holy Communion 10.30am in Church
2nd Sunday 10th May	10.30am Holy Communion		2nd Wednesday– 13th Holy Communion 10.30am at Prior Park
3rd Sunday 17th May	10.30 am Morning Worship		3rd Wednesday– 20th Morning Prayer 10.30am In Church
4th Sunday 24th May	10.30 am Holy Communion for Pentecost	7.30pm Compline	4th Wednesday– 27th Holy Communion 10.30am In church
5th Sunday 31st May	10.30am Team Holy Communion at St Helen's		

Regular activities:

- Monday mornings - Little Fishes 9.30 - 11.30am during term time
- Mondays - Pilgrim group
- 1st & 3rd Wednesday - We're in stitches – 2 till 4pm
- Thursdays - Choir practice – 6.30 till 8.30pm
- Fridays - Heart- warming Space 2-4pm
- Saturdays - Parish Prayers – 9.30am in the Hastings chapel
- 1st Saturday - Pause for Paws

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 2nd until Monday 4th May- 'Made By Me' exhibition- See poster.

Sunday 3rd May– Soiree– Organ recital– 6-8pm

Join us again for evensong, followed by refreshments and an organ recital by Chris Ouvry-Johns– Director of Music at Leicester Cathedral.

Monday 4th May– Lunchtime Recital– 12.20pm

Anna Haines and Andrew Chapman will give a short recital of music to end the exhibition weekend. Admission free, donations welcomed.

Friday 8th May– Messy Church– 4.15-5.30pm in the Heritage Centre

Activities for all ages to learn, play and worship together. Including creative crafts, stories, songs and refreshments.

Thursday 14th May– Holy Communion for Ascension Day– 7.30pm

Service of Holy Communion held at St Helen's and accompanied by the choir.

Sunday 24th May– Compline– 7.30pm in the Chancel in Church

Many people said how much they appreciated the 20 minute services of Compline during Holy Week. After discussion with the Ministry Team, we would like to offer a service of Compline on the 4th Sunday of each month at 7.30pm in the Chancel at church. This will include a time of silence in which you may like to offer to God the coming week.

Services in May

Sunday 3rd May

6:00pm Soirée - Evensong
followed by a recital

Sunday 17th May

10:30am Morning Worship

Sunday 10th May

10:30am Holy Communion

Sunday 24th May

10:30am Holy Communion
7:30pm Compline - Evening
Prayer

Thursday 14th May

Ascension Day
7:30pm Holy Communion

Sunday 31st May

10:30am Holy Communion

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GARDENING TIPS FOR MAY

May has arrived and the days are getting longer and warmer. April 2026 was characterised by a cool, moist start followed by a significant warming trend with temperatures as high as 20 Degrees Centigrade lately. It is time to tidy up Spring plants and plant out Summer-flowers, fruit and vegetables. It is also a good opportunity to experiment with something new – what about a grass, fern or wild flower area?

Start to plan your Summer annual areas and/or your Summer pots. Plant out Dahlias as well as Cosmos and other half-hardy annuals to fill gaps in the border. Don't forget to pinch out the growing tips of Cosmos to encourage them to branch out lower down the stem, thus producing stronger and sturdier plants. We have a Spanish area (out of respect of our many Spanish family members). There are various sizes of Spanish pots and we restrict our choice to, "Hot Colours" – reds, yellows and oranges. We have them placed all together and we add a few ceramic lizards for interest. They are generally not frost-proof so remember to protect them in the Winter.

Start to mow lawns weekly but think about leaving some areas uncut for wildlife. Just as a reminder, if you need to clip hedges you need to ensure that there are no nesting birds in them first. The bird nesting season runs from March to August.

After all risk of frost has passed this month, plant out tomatoes, courgettes and pumpkins that were previously sown under cover. In general, plant out other young plants once conditions are suitable and they have been hardened off for at least 5 days.

To get the best out of watering then water early and late in the day and recycle water whenever possible. Keep removing weeds from your beds and containers. Clean out your greenhouse of last years stored plants and don't forget to open vents and doors on warm days when you have new plants. You can also damp down your greenhouse on very hot days to increase humidity and deter Red Spider Mites.

Ponds can quickly fill up with algae and pond weed during warmer months. Keep on top of this regularly by sieving out excess weed. Keep pond pumps and filters clean. Remove decaying leaves from any water lilies and add more aquatic plants to encourage wildlife. Hedgehogs are out and about now and we spotted many on outdoor cameras. We feed them nightly using a specialist Hedgehog feed.

Check for infestations of Aphids on Roses. Wash them off with soapy water so that no harmful pesticides are needed.

This month should see the completion of potato planting. Don't forget to earth up your potatoes to stop the crop forming on the soil surface and turning green and therefore poisonous. Start planting directly into the ground succession crops such as; chard, lettuce, spinach, rocket, parsnip, turnip, carrots and peas etc. Prepare the ground for runner beans early in the month by digging the soil well and incorporating a little garden compost. Also put your supporting canes and nets in place.

Now is a good time to start planning your garden visits, and garden show visits. We are very fortunate in Ashby and surrounding areas as we have many excellent garden centres to visit and also enjoy their lovely cafes.

Finally, get your patio ready for Summer! Decorate your outdoor space with brightly coloured seat pads, cushions, colourful solar lights, hanging chimes, and metal wind spinners etc.

Alan and Alison Cross

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If you'd like to contact Mo (the coordinator):
07748 157649

Or contact Anne (group leader)
she's on Instagram: @new_vintage_sewing



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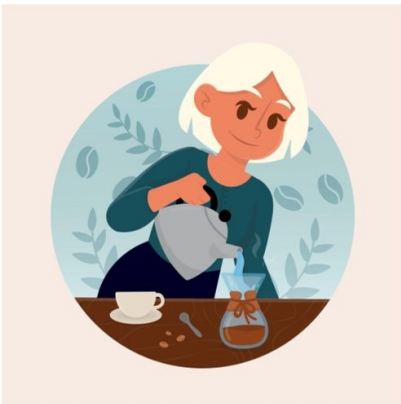
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